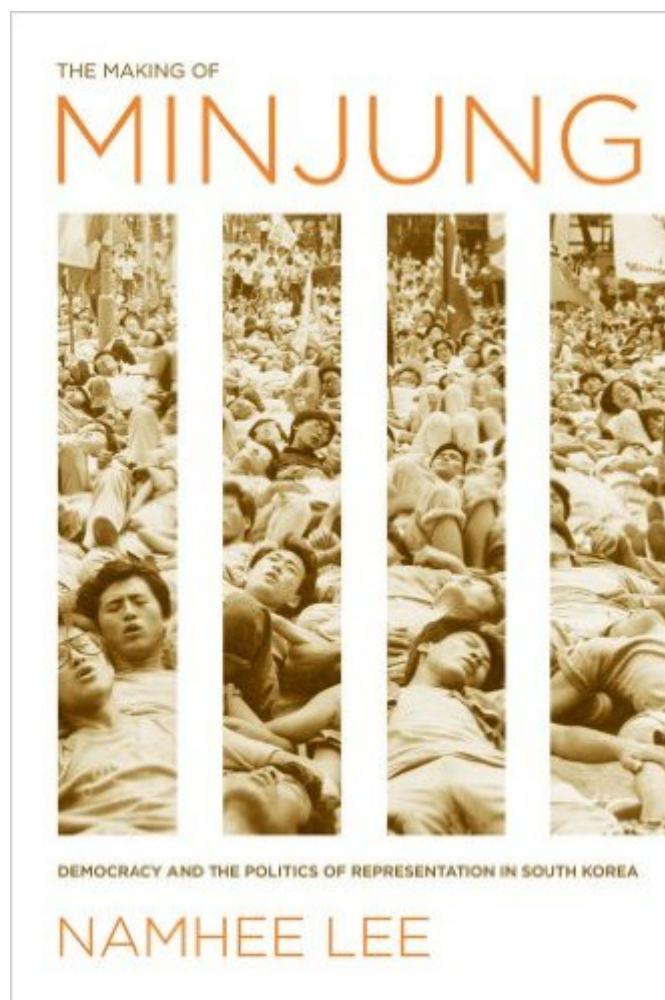


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The Making Of Minjung: Democracy And The Politics Of Representation In South Korea



Synopsis

In this sweeping intellectual and cultural history of the *minjung* ("common people's") movement in South Korea, Namhee Lee shows how the movement arose in the 1970s and 1980s in response to the repressive authoritarian regime and grew out of a widespread sense that the nation's "failed history" left Korean identity profoundly incomplete. *The Making of Minjung* captures the movement in its many dimensions, presenting its intellectual trajectory as a discourse and its impact as a political movement, as well as raising questions about how intellectuals represented the *minjung*. Lee's portrait is based on a wide range of sources: underground pamphlets, diaries, court documents, contemporary newspaper reports, and interviews with participants. Thousands of students and intellectuals left universities during this period and became factory workers, forging an intellectual-labor alliance perhaps unique in world history. At the same time, *minjung* cultural activists reinvigorated traditional folk theater, created a new "minjung literature," and influenced religious practices and academic disciplines. In its transformative scope, the *minjung* phenomenon is comparable to better-known contemporaneous movements in South Africa, Latin America, and Eastern Europe. Understanding the *minjung* movement is essential to understanding South Korea's recent resistance to U.S. influence. Along with its well-known economic transformation, South Korea has also had a profound social and political transformation. The *minjung* movement drove this transformation, and this book tells its story comprehensively and critically.

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